

Charting the Course for our Sailors Today, Tomorrow and Beyond

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By Vice Adm. Robert Burke, Chief of Naval Personnel

For more than 240 years, the U.S. Navy has served as America's first line of defense, strategic deterrent, and protector of trade across the world's oceans. Our role in safeguarding freedom of the seas has never been more relevant. From the South China Sea to our Pacific shores, from the Arabian Gulf to the Eastern Atlantic, there is no shortage of headlines about the challenges we face, making the U.S. Navy's presence in waters around the world an imperative. We are a busy force that operates with a clear purpose in an uncertain time.

There are many reasons to pay close attention to potential challenges that could affect us, including an unpredictable economy, a declining veteran population, growing competition for high-tech skills, and personnel costs that account for more than 50 percent of the Navy's budget.

Without changing how we operate today, we risk being unprepared for the future. And unless we upgrade the Navy's analytic tools and supporting infrastructure now, we will find ourselves near shoal water when the seas begin to get heavy.

The 40+ personnel initiatives that comprise Sailor 2025 are aimed at empowering COs, having flexible policies, better tools, and more choices for those who might otherwise not join the Navy or who might consider leaving. We are modernizing how Sailors manage their careers, pay and personnel issues, and how we attract new recruits to join our force. Some of these initiatives include looking at our performance evaluation and career management systems, increased graduate education opportunities, tours with industry, career intermission program, expanded Child Development Center and fitness center hours, along with many others. And we will do this all with the underlying principle that Sailors' work-life balance and health and wellness must be improved.

Adm. Moran knew that we were long overdue for a change, and set us on a course for change.

I am committed to see us through that voyage, and will continue put policies in place that further enhance trust, balance and stability throughout the Fleet.

Our Navy today has the best Sailors we've ever seen. We aim to keep it that way.